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SUBJECT: ITALY SUPPORTS US VIEWS ON GAERC AND COUNCIL AGENDA

REF: A) STATE 125932 B) VIENNA 510 C) BRUSSELS 2456

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR GARY ROBBINS.  
REASON:1.4 (B) (D)

1. (C) Summary: MFA officials briefed poloffs on positions Italy will take during GAERC and Council meetings during the week of June 14. European Neighborhood Policy debate will continue at both GAERC and Council meetings. The unanimous UNSC approval of the new Iraq resolution has prepared the ground for ministers and heads of government to have productive discussions on the way forward, and Italy supports the EU's targets for political and economic stability in its medium-term Iraq strategy; the Council will also highlight the UN's central role. Italy generally prefers an open dialogue with Iran on nuclear and other issues. Italy wants the US, as leader of the Quartet, to move the Road Map forward, but collaborate with its partners before presenting any initiatives. Sudan discussions will focus on ensuring that the UN system delivers aid to Darfur using a coordinated approach, making clear to the Sudanese government that it must comply fully with its commitments rather than continuing with piecemeal concessions. END SUMMARY

#### European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)

2. (C) MFA EU Institutional Affairs Director Michele Quarone told Poloff on June 10 that the ENP strategy paper had been officially presented to Member States and that debate continues on some details. The strategy paper refers to the adoption of action plans with a life of 4-5 years and with a mid-term review after 2 years. He said that Italy was content with ENP developments. He underlined, however, that the process was not a "shortcut" to membership, a notion mistakenly held by Ukraine and Moldova among other partner states; it represents a tool for development assistance for eastern European countries. Quarone said that, in a nod to Moscow's concerns, Russia would now be treated outside the ENP, in a "strategic partnership" with the EU, which recognizes its longer and more robust relationship with Brussels. Some Neighborhood Funds could be used for projects in Russia, he added. Quarone was hopeful that ENP documentation could be approved by the European Council and jointly signed by the partner states in July.

#### Iraq

3. (C) MFA Director for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Luigi Mattiolo said that, given the unanimous UNSC approval of the new Iraq resolution, he expects EU foreign ministers and heads of government to have a productive discussion about the way forward in Iraq. The EU will target political and economic stability in its medium-term Iraq strategy; the Council will also highlight the UN's central role. He said that EU member states are optimistic about new relations with Iraq and hopes the EU will augment its diplomatic and development assistance personnel on the ground as soon as possible after the June 30 handover. Ministers will also discuss preparations and EU financial contributions for elections. Iraqi debt reduction is not on the agenda for the GAERC sessions. Mattiolo underlined that most debt restructuring or forgiveness decisions will be made on a bilateral basis.

#### Iran ) Carrots prevailing over sticks at the GAERC

4. (C) Poloff delivered points on Iran to MFA Office Director for Arms Control Giovanni Iannuzzi. Iannuzzi said that there would be little substantive discussion of the IAEA BOG at the GAERC since the main focus is on Vienna. The EU-3 submitted their draft BOG resolution (ref b) to other EU member states on June 8. Iannuzzi described it as fairly balanced, drawing heavily on El Baradei's report -- nearly to the extent, as he put it, of "plagiarism." The EU-3 reportedly asked each member state to respond "bilaterally." Italy would like to see more effective language added to provide a timeframe for the on-going discussions with Iran. If Iran wants the BOG to "leave it in peace" and resume a normal role in the IAEA, it needs to immediately comply with the BOG's report. Italy agrees that Iran must be completely transparent with respect to its nuclear program, including P-2 and other activities. Iannuzzi noted that, according to recent Reuters and AP reports, even Khatami understands that the BOG cannot yet close the book on Iran and will discuss it again in September.

15. (C) Iannuzzi stressed the need, &in the spirit of

Vienna" to continue the dialogue between the BOG and the rest of the IAEA in an effort to reach consensus. At the GAERC, he said, Italy generally prefers a minimalist, rather than tough, approach on Iran because of the desire to maintain an open dialogue on the nuclear and other issues. For example, the EU-Iran dialogue on human rights will resume June 14-15 (ref c) after months of &postponements8 caused by Iran,s displeasure with European support last November for a UN human rights resolution. However, he said, the EU is fully aware that it can not move forward on other issues with Iran until the nuclear issue is resolved.

BMENA

16. (C) Poloff delivered points on the Middle East and Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative to MFA Office Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Luca Ferrari. Ferrari said Italy completely supports the BMENA and the draft US-UK text at the G-8 Summit. Though acknowledging that the EU drafted US-EU statement on the Broader Middle East was disappointing, Ferrari said his office has not pushed the Irish EU Presidency on this issue. The Italian DG for the Middle East and Mediterranean, along with its counterparts in other EU states, had submitted its input to the Irish Presidency, but had not fought for any changes as long as the text remained innocuous. He explained that, after six months at the helm of the EU Presidency, Italy prefers to take a back seat to the Irish. Unfortunately, the Irish Presidency has turned out to be rather weak, especially after the Spanish elections. Where before the Irish perceived a critical mass of conservative like-minded countries (including Italy) on issues like the Middle East, Zapatero,s election has quelled Dublin,s eagerness to court these members in an effort to pursue a strong EU policy, he said.

17. (C) Another problem, he added, was that the Irish submitted their first draft too far in advance, giving &every second secretary8 in every capital the opportunity to add his two cents. Italy,s strategy during its Presidency was to limit the discussion of draft statements, which made Italy a stronger and more effective at the EU helm. Now, he admitted, Italy is experiencing a bit of EU fatigue and wants to avoid horse trading, although he agreed that the end result was disappointing. The US-EU Summit, he added, coming at a time of major changes in the EU, is relatively unimportant, particularly in comparison with recent major events such as President Bush's visit to Rome, the G-8 summit, and the Istanbul Summit.

Middle East ) Looking to the US for Leadership

18. (C) On the Middle East Peace Process, Ferrari urged the US, the de facto leader of the Quartet, to move the Road Map forward, but stressed the need to collaborate with its partners before presenting any initiatives. Poloff asked about recent discussions by EU High Representative Solana and by EU Quartet representative, Marc Otte, with the Egyptians. Ferrari said nothing special resulted from either set of discussions. Otte will play a collaborative but not propositional role in the Quartet, preferring to keep a low profile, since he is an EU bureaucrat rather than a political animal, and hails from a relatively unimportant EU member (Belgium).

19. (C) Ferrari said Italy is in favor of NATO involvement in Gaza once the conditions are right, but the optimal solution would be for an extension of the MFO,s mandate. He warned that we must not let Hamas take control in Gaza. Arafat, he commented, currently is playing a more collaborative role in an effort to increase his freedom of movement.

SUDAN

10. (C) Stefano Dejak, East Africa Office Director, told poloff that Sudan discussion at the GAERC and Council will focus on ensuring that the UN system delivers aid to Darfur using a coordinated approach, making clear to the Sudanese government that it must comply fully with its commitments rather than continuing with piecemeal concessions. Dejak stressed that timing is essential - the window of opportunity to provide needed humanitarian aid is closing rapidly. Dejak said that Italy will provide funding for the peace observer mission and will also deploy a military observer. Italy may also provide funds for a Human Rights observer mission.

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